THE

RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE

Charitable Iriſh Society,

ESTABLISHED AT

HALIFAX,

IN THE

PROVINCE OF NOVA-SCOTIA.

HALIFAX:

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THE

RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE

CHARITABLE IRISH SOCIETY

Introduction.

WHEN the helpleſs ſtate of man, if left in his natural condition, is conſidered, he, of all the animal creation, will be found moſt in want of ſociety. By means of well regulated ſociety the weakneſs of man is protected, his wants are relieved, his misfortunes alleviated, and his moral nature improved.

Society at large is highly benefitted by every inſtitution which has a tendency to promote private friendſhip; the juſt obſervance of which gradually enlarges the mind and humanizes the heart. Friendſhip at firſt is confined within a very narrow compaſs; extending its care and attention to a few individuals. The ſentiments of benevolence produced by ſuch intercourſe, ſoon beget a ſtrong inclination in the human mind to extend the bounds of friendſhip; Societies of particular ranks and deſcriptions of men are formed; new ſources of benevolence are diſcovered, the underſtanding is improved, and at length generous ſentiments of friendſhip to all mankind ariſe amongſt thoſe who at firſt aſſociated only to extend their friendſhip to the natives of ſome particular ſpot of the earth. A mind thus prepared, conſiders

the human race but as one ſociety, and the wants and misfortunes of every individual equally intitled to compaſſion and relief.

On the 17th day of January, in the year 1786, a number of Natives of the Kingdom of Ireland, inhabitants of the Town of Halifax, in the Province of Nova-Scotia, (ſenſibly feeling the obligations which they owed to ſociety, and zealouſly wiſhing to promote and encourage friendſhip and good will amongſt men), held a meeting at the houſe of Mr. John O'Brien, in Halifax, and ſigned Articles of Aſſociation, for the purpoſe of relieving the wants and misfortunes of their Countrymen; which Aſſociation was ſtiled The CHARITABLE IRISH SOCIETY.

Experience proving the utility of ſuch Society, its funds and numbers have rapidly encreaſed, and the Society finding that the original Articles of Aſſociation were in many reſpects inſufficient to govern the Society in its improved and enlarged ſtate, CHARLES HILL and RICHARD JOHN UNIACKE, Eſquires, were, on the 17th day of May, in the year 1794, appointed a Committee to review and examine the former Articles, and to report a new ſet of Conſtitutions for the future regulation of the Society.

On the 17th day of February, in the year 1795, at the Anniverſary meeting of the Society, at Mr. Gallagher's, in the town of Halifax, the Committee made its report, and a ſpecial meeting of the Society was ordered to be held on the 25th of March following, for the conſideration thereof; on which day the Society having met and conſidered the report of the Committee,

the

the following Conſtitutions for the future regulation of the CHARITABLE IRISH SOCIETY, were adopted and agreed to be obſerved by all its Members.

SECTION I.

The Title of the Society.

THE Style and Title of the Society and its Seal to remain as eſtabliſhed by the original Articles of Aſſociation. Title of the Society.

SECTION II.

Qualifications of Members.

NATIVES of Ireland; deſcendants of Iriſhmen or women; perſons born in the province of Nova-Scotia; natives of any other country, who are inhabitants of this province, and who are not members of any national ſociety eſtabliſhed therein; and deſcendants of any preſent or future Member of this Society; are qualified to be choſen Members. Qualification of Members.

SECTION III.

Mode of Election.

A perſon, deſiring to become a Member of this Society, muſt be propoſed by a Member thereof, at a general or ſpecial meeting of the Society. Mode of chooſing new Members.

The Member who propoſes another for admiſſion, muſt deliver to the Secretary of the Society, in writing, the name and age of the perſon propoſed, the place of his nativity,

nativity, together with the place of his preſent reſidence, which deſcription the Secretary muſt enter in a Book to be kept for that purpoſe, with the time and proceeding relative to the election of ſuch perſon.

The election of a new Member muſt be by Ballot, but previous thereto the Committee for examining the characters and qualifications of new Members, muſt ſign a Certificate in the Secretary's Book, as follows :

Certificate of the Qualification of a new Member.

" WE do certify that we have diligently inquired in-
" to the character and qualification of
" propoſed to be a Member of this Society and from the
" beſt information we can procure, we believe him to
" be an honeſt man, poſſeſſed of a diſpoſition that will
" not diſturb the friendly harmony of the Society, and
" in every other reſpect qualified to become a Member
" of it, agreeably to the ſecond ſection of the Conſtitu-
" tion."—

No new Member to be admitted but with the conſent of two thirds of the Members preſent, at the time of the Ballot going round.

Contribution to be paid by a new Member.

Every new Member, on being admitted, ſhall ſubſcribe his name to the Conſtitutions entered in the Secretary's Book, and ſhall pay to the Treaſurer a ſum not leſs than Four Dollars, to be applied to the Charitable Fund, and the ſum of Two Shillings and Six-pence to the Secretary for his trouble.

Every new Member ſhall be furniſhed with a Book of the Conſtitutions, and his name ſhall be added to the liſt of Members by the Secretary.

The Preſident, Vice-Preſident and Aſſiſtants for the time

time being, in caſe any perſon who is a Paſſenger or Sojourner in the province, ſhall deſire to become an Honorary Member, may certify ſuch perſon's qualifications in the Secretary's Book, and on ſuch Certificate he may be immediately balloted for and choſen an honorary Member of the Society in the manner before-mentioned, ſuch perſon contributing to the Charitable Fund a ſum not leſs than Six Dollars, together with the Secretary's dues. Admiſſion of Honorary Members.

If ſuch honorary Member ſhall afterwards deſire to become a ſtanding Member of the Society, he ſhall be at liberty ſo to do, on paying to the Fund of Charity, the quarterly dues to be computed from the time of his admiſſion.

Section IV.

Officers of the Society; Mode of appointing them, and their Duty.

THE Officers of this Society ſhall conſiſt of a Preſident, Vice-Preſident, and two Aſſiſtants, a Treaſurer, Secretary, and Deputy-Secretary who ſhall be choſen annually by the majority of the Society on the Seventeenth Day of February, unleſs the ſame ſhall happen to fall on a Sunday, in ſuch caſe the election of Officers to be made on the day following; the Officers to enter on their functions the 17th day of March each year. Mode of chooſing Officers.

The Preſident, or, in his abſence, the Vice-Preſident, or, in his abſence, the Aſſiſtants, according to ſeniority of appointment, ſhall, in caſes of neceſſity, have power to aſſemble the Society at the uſual place appointed for meeting in the town of Halifax, and ſhall lay before the Society Duty of Preſident, Vice-Preſident, and Aſſiſtants.

Society the cauſe or cauſes of ſuch ſpecial meeting, the ſame to be conſidered according to the uſual mode heretofore practiſed.

One of the foregoing Officers ſhall preſide, according to rank, at all meetings, and the remainder of ſuch Officers ſhall aid and aſſiſt the preſiding Officer in ſuch manner as he ſhall think beſt according to the uſual practice of the Society.

The preſiding Officer ſhall ſtate to the Society all queſtions which may ariſe for conſideration, and, after debate, ſhall declare the opinion of the Society according to the will of the majority thereof preſent at the debate; and in caſe any doubt ſhall ariſe with reſpect to the judgment of the preſiding Officer as to the majority, he ſhall proceed to aſcertain the opinion of the Society on ſuch doubtful queſtion by Ballot, the majority appearing on ſuch Ballot to determine the queſtion, and preclude further debate thereon.

The preſiding Officer with the other Officers before named, are inveſted with full power and authority at every meeting, to preſerve ſilence, order and decorum in the Society, to check all irregularity, and to impoſe a fine at their diſcretion on any offending member not exceeding the ſum of One Shilling.

The Preſident, or preſiding Officer for the time being, to have the cuſtody and uſe of the Seal; and in caſe any thing ſhould happen to prevent the Society meeting at the place which the majority ſhall from time to time appoint, ſuch Officer ſhall convene the Society at ſome other place in the Town of Halifax.

The

The Secretary, or his Deputy, ſhall keep an exact liſt of the Members of the Society, both honorary and otherwiſe, and ſhall keep an exact account of the times each Member ſhall abſent himſelf from the meetings of the Society, and of the ſums reſpectively due from each Member to the Society. He ſhall alſo ſummon each Member (except thoſe who ſhall be excuſed) to attend not only the regular meetings of the Society, but alſo ſuch ſpecial meetings as the preſiding Officer of the Society ſhall appoint; the ſummons to be in writing, and left at each Member's place of abode at leaſt three days before the time of meeting, unleſs in caſe of ſpecial meetings, where the time appointed by the preſiding Officer will not admit thereof: In ſuch caſes the ſummonſes to be ſerved as expeditiouſly as the time will admit. He ſhall alſo keep a regular entry of all the by-laws and proceedings of the Society in a book to be kept for that purpoſe, with a proper index thereto. He ſhall have the cuſtody and care of all the books and papers of the Society. He ſhall aid and aſſiſt the Committee of Charity, in entering all their proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpoſe; and ſhall at every annual meeting of the Society, in February, lay ſuch book before the Society, with an abſtract of all relief granted by the Society, or its Committee, to perſons in diſtreſs, during the paſt year, with the preſent ſtate and ſituation of the individuals relieved; which abſtract, after the Society have approved of it, ſhall be entered in its proceedings. Duty of the Secretary.

As much will depend on the care and attention of the Secretary and his Deputy, he ſhall be allowed for ſummoning each meeting of the Society and his attendance Allowance to Secretary.

thereon, the ſum of two dollars; for his attendance on the Committee of Charity, at all their meetings for the year, the ſum of eight dollars; and for every Certificate granted to a Member, the ſum of one dollar.

Treaſurer. His Duty.

The Treaſurer ſhall hold all the funds of the Society in his name, he ſigning and ſealing an inſtrument in writing, declaring the uſes, and giving a receipt to the Secretary for the amount thereof, which inſtruments and receipts the Secretary ſhall carefully preſerve with the papers of the Society. All receipts and payments ſhall be made by the Treaſurer, and he ſhall exhibit his books to the Society at each meeting, in which a regular account of all receipts and payments ſhall be entered; and at each February meeting he ſhall exhibit an abſtract of the receipts and payments, together with with a ſtate of the funds belonging to the Society, which ſhall be entered by the Secretary in the proceedings of the Society, after the ſame ſhall have been examined and paſt.

Deputy Secretary: his Duty and allowance

The Deputy Secretary ſhall aid and aſſiſt the Secretary in his duty, and ſhall officiate in his abſence, for which ſervice he ſhall receive one ſixth part of all the Secretary's fees and emoluments.

Committees to be choſen.

In addition to the foregoing Officers, there ſhall be choſen at the February meeting, annually, Three Committees, viz.—A Committee of Charity; a Committee of Collection and Examination, and a Committee of Review.

Committee of Charity; its Duty.

The Committee of Charity ſhall conſiſt of Six Members, to be annually choſen by the majority of the Society. This Committee ſhall have power to appoint as

as many times for their meeting as it ſhall think neceſſary, and ſhall be attended by the Secretary, or his Deputy, and ſhall from time to time diſtribute the ordinary relief of the Society to ſuch perſons as it ſhall think moſt deſerving, and in ſuch manner as ſhall be moſt beneficial to the perſons who receive the ſame, rendering regular accounts quarterly to the Society, of the expenditure of the ſums which ſhall be voted to them at each quarterly meeting. No relief to be granted but with the conſent of a majority of the Committee, and in caſes of doubt or difficulty, it ſhould conſult with the Preſident, Vice-Preſident, Aſſiſtants and Treaſurer, in which caſes one at leaſt of the before named Officers ſhould join in opinion with ſuch majority.

As the community in which we live makes proviſion every ſix months for the ſupport of the poor, to which we all contribute, it is the duty of the Committee to intereſt itſelf on behalf of the diſtreſſed (who by reſidence are entitled to a ſhare of the public relief) and to put them in the way of obtaining that aſſiſtance from the community at large, which by law they are entitled to: By ſuch proceeding the funds which the Society appropriate to the Committee for general relief, will extend further, and the Committee be enabled more effectually to ſuccour the unfortunate who have no claim on the community at large.

The Committee ſhall alſo attend carefully to orphans, and the children of parents whoſe misfortunes or vices have put it out of their power to ſupport their offſpring, taking care to have ſuch children bound to good maſters or miſtreſſes, who may bring them up to ſome uſeful employment, and, in caſes of difficulty, to apply to the

Magiſtrates and Overſeers of the Poor, who by law are bound to interpoſe their authority to relieve diſtreſs of this deſcription. Attention to this duty will be the means of reſcuing many helpleſs children from ruin, and ſave the community the pain of daily ſeeing hungry and diſtreſſed children begging food from door to door.

In a town like this, the ſources of vice are numerous, and much of the diſtreſs which we are called upon to relieve ariſes from the temptations into which the inconſiderate and unguarded fall; it will therefore be the peculiar duty of the Committee to point out to the Society at every quarterly meeting ſuch meaſures as ſhall appear neceſſary for the Society to adopt to diſcourage as far as in its power the growth of vice and immorality.

In all caſes where the poor ſuffer oppreſſion, it will be the duty of the Committee to interpoſe its intereſt in their behalf; and if occaſion ſhall require it, to call for the aid of the Society, which, as far its means will permit, will have recourſe to the legal authority of the country for their relief.

In all caſes where the misfortunes of individuals ſhall require aſſiſtance beyond the means furniſhed to the Committee quarterly by the Society, (under the denomination of the fund for the ordinary relief of diſtreſſed perſons) the Committee ſhall report to the Society at their next quarterly meeting the caſe of ſuch individual or individuals, and point out to the Society the means of relief, as the Society will receive no application for its extraordinary interpoſition until the Committee ſhall have firſt reported thereon.

The Committee of Collection and Examination ſhall

conſiſt

conſiſt of Three Members, and ſhall apply to the Secretary from time to time for an account of all ſums due from Members who have been abſent for any time from the Society, and ſhall proceed to collect the ſame from ſuch abſentees, and ſhall alſo urge ſuch perſons to attend the meetings of the Society more punctually in future, and ſhall render an account of their proceedings quarterly to the Society, with a report of the cauſes of ſuch Members abſence; which account and report, after it ſhall have paſſed the Society, ſhall be entered in the Secretary's Book with the reſolutions of the Society thereon; and the abſent members ſhall be credited by the Secretary with the ſums by them paid to ſuch Committee.

Committee of Collection and Examination; its Duty.

This Committee ſhall alſo explain to the benevolent and well-diſpoſed, the nature of the Society and the objects which it has in view, and ſhall ſolicit contributions from ſuch perſons to ſupport the funds of the Society.

All monies which the Committee ſhall receive, ſhall be immediately paid to the Treaſurer. This Committee ſhall alſo carefully examine into the character and qualifications of every perſon who ſhall be propoſed as a member of the Society, and ſhall certify and report thereon in the manner directed in the 3d Section of theſe Conſtitutions.

Committee of Review and Superintendance.

The Committee of Review and Superintendance ſhall conſiſt of Three Members, who ſhall receive communications from all members of the Society on ſubjects which have a tendency to promote its increaſe, and to forward the benevolent objects which it has in view; it ſhall report quarterly to the Society ſuch alterations

rations and amendments as ſhall appear neceſſary to be made in its Conſtitutions, and ſhall alſo prepare and lay before the Society a plan for eſtabliſhing a fund to ſupport the widows and children of its members.

Badge of the Society.

On public occaſions the Officers of the Society are to wear a Green Saſh, with a Harp and Crown thereon, agreeably to the uſage of the Society heretofore.

Section V.

Duty of the Members.

Members; their duty.

AS the proſperity of the Society will entirely depend on the good conduct of its members, it is fit that the Conſtitutions ſhould point out the duties which they undertake to perform on becoming members of it; they are to aid and aſſiſt the Officers of the Society in doing the duties of their reſpective ſtations; they are to obey the regular ſummons and all conſtitutional orders of the Society; they are to be punctual in their attendance at its regular and ſpecial meetings, and in every reſpect to promote its intereſt; they are in all caſes reſpecting the Society to be governed by the opinion of the majority; they are to do every thing in their power (without injuring themſelves or families materially) to aid and aſſiſt the poor and diſtreſſed of every nation; they are on all occaſions to intereſt themſelves in behalf of the oppreſſed or afflicted, and to comfort and relieve them as far as they are able; they are from time to time to inform the proper Officers of the Society, if any caſe comes to their knowledge, where the poor or diſtreſſed may be aſſiſted by the Society, and are in every reſpect to act as the friends

friends of thoſe who cannot help themſelves; they are on all occaſions to behave as good ſubjects, and zealouſly to exert themſelves in ſupport of the laws of their country, carefully avoiding in the Society all controverſy on religious or political ſubjects. To their fellow members they are to conduct themſelves with kindneſs and affection, uſing every means in their power to promote friendſhip and harmony in the Society, and between the individual members of it. They are to be ready on all occaſions, as far as their circumſtances and abilities permit, to aid and aſſiſt a member when in adverſity or trouble. If they know of any difference or diſagreement ſubſiſting between any two members of the Society, it is their duty immediately to interfere and to take the moſt effectual means to reconcile the parties, and to adjuſt whatever matter may be in difference. If their endeavours ſhould be unſucceſsful, it is their duty to call for the aid of any other member or members of the Society, whoſe interference they may think would have more influence with the parties at variance; and if they ſhall be unable to reconcile them, it is their duty to report the parties at variance to the Society at their next meeting, that effectual means may be taken to adjuſt the matters in diſpute between them. When one member ſees another injuring or likely to injure himſelf by any imprudent conduct, it is his duty privately to admoniſh ſuch member, and if he finds him perſiſt in doing what he conceives to be wrong, he is privately to adviſe with other members of the Society on the ſubject, and requeſt their aid; and if ſuch wrong doer will not profit from their united admonitions, it is their duty to report his caſe to the Society, that more effectual means

may

may be taken to reclaim him. The members are by all honeſt means to promote each others intereſt and happineſs. They are in caſes of ſickneſs or death in any of their families, to tender their ſervices to the afflicted family; and if the ſituation of the family requires it, they are to attend it in ſuch numbers, and at ſuch times, as the Committee of Charity ſhall appoint. In caſe of the death of a member, it is their duty to aid and aſſiſt at his funeral, in ſuch manner as the Officers of the Society ſhall direct, and by all means in their power to comfort and aſſiſt the widow and orphans of the deceaſed. Finally, it is the duty of the members by their punctual attendance at the public ſervice of the ſeveral religious Societies to which they reſpectively belong, and, by the regularity of their lives to ſet a good example to others, and thereby encourage the well diſpoſed to unite in the ſupport of a Society, which has no other object in view but to comfort the afflicted, and to promote harmony and good will amongſt men.

Section VI.

Times of Meeting and Celebration of the Annual Feſtival.

Times of Meeting.

FOR conducting the buſineſs of the Society, it ſhall be aſſembled, at ſuch places in the Town of Halifax, as the majority ſhall appoint, three times in the year, (beſides its anniverſary meeting on the 17th day of February, before mentioned) that is to ſay, on the 17th day May, 17th day of Auguſt and 17th day of November, unleſs Sunday ſhould intervene, in ſuch caſe the meeting to be the Monday following. The meetings in the winter ſeaſon, to be at 6 o'clock in the evening, and in ſummer

ſummer, at 7 o'clock, at which hour the preſiding Officer is, preciſely, to take the chair. Half an hour afterwards, the liſt of members ſummoned, is to be called over, and every abſent member fined One Shilling, unleſs a ſufficient excuſe (to the ſatisfaction of a majority of the Society) ſhall be made for ſuch neglect.

Abſent Members to be fined.

Honorary Members are excuſed from being ſummoned, and in caſe the ſituation or buſineſs of any other Member ſhould make his attendance inconvenient, the Preſident may, with the approbation of a majority of the Society, excuſe ſuch member from being ſummoned, nevertheleſs it is expected ſuch excuſed member will attend as often as he can conveniently.

Members excuſed from Attendance.

Thoroughly ſenſible of the bleſſings of the Chriſtian religion, the Society will celebrate their annual Feſtival on the 17th day of March, being the day which immemorial cuſtom has ſet apart for the commemoration of the holy St. PATRICK, who firſt preached the Chriſtian religion to many of our anceſtors. On that day the members of the Society are to wear in their hats and on their breaſts, a ſprig of the Shamrock, which as tradition informs us, many of the firſt Chriſtians wore as a ſymbol of their belief in our holy religion. It having been uſed by St. PATRICK as a Type to explain to his hearers a part of our religious myſtery. If the 17th of March ſhould happen to be Sunday, the Feſtival is to be celebrated the Monday following. The mode of celebrating this Feſtival annually, ſhall be regulated by the Society at the anniverſary meeting on the 17th of February.

Annual Feſtival.

Section VII.

Funds of the Society.

Funds of the Society and Contributions.

THE Funds of the Society are to conſiſt of the monies now at intereſt, and in the hands of the Treaſurer, the donations of new members, and the contributions of the charitable and well-diſpoſed; in addition to which each member (except honorary ones) is to pay the ſum of Two Shillings every quarter. When the money in the Treaſurer's hands ſhall amount to Twenty Pounds, over and above what ſhall be neceſſary to defray the current expences of the Society, the ſame ſhall be let out to intereſt, and inveſted in the public ſecurities of the province by the Treaſurer, if to be purchaſed; and if not, then to be lent in ſums not leſs than Twenty pounds to ſuch perſon or perſons, and on ſuch ſecurity as the Society ſhall appoint.

Money to be voted for Charity.

The Society at every quarterly meeting ſhall vote ſuch ſum (as its circumſtances will admit) to the Committee of Charity to be by them applied to the ordinary relief of diſtreſſed perſons.

Expence of Meeting.

At every meeting of the Society, each member preſent ſhall alſo pay One Shilling, to defray the expences of the meeting.

Section VIII.

Proviſion in caſe of the Abſence, Removal, or Death of any of the Officers.

Abſence or Death of Officers.

IF any of the Officers of the Society are by removal, ſickneſs, death, or otherwiſe prevented from attending the

the duty of their reſpective ſtations, the Society ſhall at their next regular meeting, chuſe others to ſerve in their room for the remainder of the year; or if the neceſſity of the caſe ſhall require it, a ſpecial meeting ſhall be called for that purpoſe.

Section IX.

Certificates to be granted, and a friendly Intercourſe kept up with other Societies.

Certificates to Members.

THE Society will, by every means in their power, cultivate and keep up a friendly intercourſe with all Societies which are or ſhall be formed for the purpoſe of granting relief to the diſtreſſed, and will uſe their beſt endeavours to promote the happineſs and proſperity of ſuch Societies.

Certificates under the Seal of the Society, and ſigned by all its Officers, ſhall be granted to every honorary member on his admiſſion. In caſe any other member ſhall deſire a Certificate, he ſhall apply to the Society for the ſame; and if a majority of the Society (on a Ballot to be taken for that purpoſe) ſhall agree thereto, ſuch Certificate ſhall be granted to him: The form of the Certificates ſo to be granted, ſhall firſt be approved by the Society, and entered in its proceedings.

Section X.

Conſtitutions to be printed.

Conſtitutions to be printed and diſtributed.

THESE Conſtitutions ſhall be entered in the Secretary's Book, and printed with a Liſt of the Names of

paſt Officers, and Members ſince the firſt formation of the Society.

When the Conſtitutions are printed, each member ſhall be furniſhed with a copy, and the remainder ſhall be depoſited in the Treaſurer's hands, for the uſe of the members who ſhall be admitted hereafter.

LIST of the MEMBERS of the CHARITABLE IRISH SOCIETY, since its Institution.

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